

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: WHEN WOMEN SUCCEED, AMERICA SUCCEEDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to lead the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour on: "When Women Succeed, America Succeeds."

I am honored to serve as the co-guest anchor this evening with my colleague and classmate, the gentlewoman from Illinois, Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY. We realize the importance "when women succeed, America succeeds" has on our economic agenda. I would also like to thank my colleagues Congressman HORSFORD and Congressman JEFFRIES for their assistance in organizing this evening's Special Order hour.

Too many women across America are being left behind in today's economy. As the President so passionately stated in his House floor speech of the state of the Union on Tuesday, today, women make up about half of our workforce, but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. This is wrong—and in 2014, it is an embarrassment. It is important for me to note: for Black women, the pay gap is even larger. Black women on the average earn only 64 cents to every dollar a man earns.

The President implored Congress, the White House, the businesses from Wall Street to Main Street to come together and give every woman the opportunity she deserves, because, "when women succeed, America succeeds."

Mr. President, I couldn't agree more, and I thank you for adding this statement, this call to action, to your State of the Union.

Many Democrats invited women from across America to attend the State of the Union address or to watch it—women who are among long-term unemployed women who are making a difference in their community, like in my community, a lady by the name of Amelia Caldwell, from the west side, working as a home health aide, or to my guest Karen Morrison, working as an executive in health care. Both must balance the work life, and both understand that we must continue to mentor and provide resources to support women, resources such as health care, child care, equal pay, affordable college tuition, early childhood education, economic development opportunities, and more advocates. Why? Because, when women succeed, America succeeds.

We know that women have made and continue to make great strides, but there is more work to be done. We must provide women with economic security and opportunities that they deserve, that their families need.

I want to thank the Congressional Black Caucus chairwoman, MARCIA FUDGE, for her leadership in making this a front-burner issue for the Congressional Black Caucus tonight.

Just think about it. Jeannette Rankin was the first woman elected to Congress in 1917, who stood before this body and said, I may be the first woman to be here, but I won't be the last. She was right. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm was the first Black woman to serve in this body, and was the first in our Nation as a female to run for President of the United States. Leader PELOSI was the highest ranking female elected to serve in American history and was the first female to serve as House Speaker.

America is a much better place because of their service, but there are still far too many women who are left behind. We can help rectify that by making sure that we advocate for women's rights—to have the right to vote, to have pay equity, pay leave, and access to quality child care. This evening, we will have the opportunity to hear many firsthand stories about women and the challenges that they face and how we can help overcome them.

Let me start by introducing my co-guest anchor, ROBIN KELLY, from the Second District of Illinois. Robin is no stranger to the challenges that women face in the workforce. As a former State legislator and administrator and scholar and now a congressional advocate for women, I proudly present the gentlelady from Illinois, and I yield to her.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman BEATTY.

I want to thank all of my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus who have joined us here tonight and who continue to fight and serve as the conscience of our Congress.

Mr. Speaker, "When Women Succeed, America Succeeds." It is a simple enough concept, yet it hasn't received the attention it deserves in the policy arena. As we reflect on moments like the fifth anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act—a bill that most of us would agree was long overdue—it is important that we keep in our minds and hearts the critical lesson of that important legislation, which is that it is unacceptable for pay discrimination to exist in our workforce, that workers who face discrimination have a right to claim compensation for the injustices they face, that regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexual identity, we all have a right to be justly compensated for our work, and most importantly, that it is beneficial to our economy, our families, and our children to pay fair wages to all of America's workers.

In that spirit, we must lift up the cause of an economic agenda for women and their families. As we look to grow our economy, let us keep in mind how women drive that growth.

Women are the breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of America's families. Women now outnumber men at every level of the higher education ladder. In 1964, only about 40 percent of women were enrolled in

any type of college. Today, that figure is 57 percent. There are, roughly, 3 million more women currently enrolled in college than men. Women-owned businesses, like those owned by Vicky Linko, Letty Velez, and Christie Hefner in Illinois, account for nearly \$3 trillion of the gross domestic product in the United States.

Women are vital to our economic future. Still, the facts on how far we need to go for women to truly achieve the American Dream are staggering.

One in three adult women is living in poverty or on the brink of it. One-quarter of single mothers spend more than half of their incomes on housing compared to one-tenth of single fathers. Of all single mothers, nearly two-thirds are working in low-wage retail, service or administrative jobs that offer little economic support to adequately provide for the needs of their families. Women make only 77 cents for every dollar a man makes—a pay gap that exists even the first year out of college and continues through a woman's life. If you are a woman of color, no matter what your education is, there is that gap, and the gap grows as your education increases. Wage disparities cost American women an estimated \$400,000 to \$2 million in lost wages over a lifetime.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congresswoman KELLY, for providing us with those necessary statistics so we have a better understanding of, when we move forward, how we need to deal with making a difference in the lives of those women.

Now I have the great honor to yield to the gentlelady from Ohio's 11th Congressional District. She is the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus. She is a leader, a lawyer, and an advocate for the people. She leads the largest delegation of the Congressional Black Caucus in its history. We stand 43 strong following her leadership. Please join me as I yield to the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE.

□ 2030

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so very much, and thank you for yielding.

I want to especially say this evening that as we talk about women, we are anchored tonight by two women, Congresswoman BEATTY, of course, from the great State of Ohio, and Congresswoman KELLY from Illinois. I have had a wonderful opportunity to meet these outstanding women, and I am so pleased that they are here this evening. I thank them again for leading this Special Order hour for the Congressional Black Caucus.

Today, members of the CBC raise our collective voices to advocate for a stronger economy by supporting and investing in working women across America.

My colleagues and I know improving the economic condition of families and communities across the country begins with strengthening the economic position of women, because when women succeed, America succeeds.

Last week, we marked the fifth anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the first piece of legislation signed by President Obama. As a result of this important legislation, women can more effectively take legal action against employers for gender-based pay discrepancies. While the Lilly Ledbetter Act helped provide a pathway for women to litigate pay discrimination, it does not address how we will invest in the economic future of working women in the United States.

Today, women comprise almost half of the American workforce. The country has come a long way in promoting equal rights and equal pay for women, but it is unacceptable that in 2014, women still make 77 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts.

In my home State of Ohio, women make approximately \$10,000 less than men each year, and in my district, the median wage for women is 86 percent of the median wage for men. According to the 2010 Census, in 40 percent of American households with children, women are the sole or primary providers, and over 30 percent of households headed by women are living in poverty.

African American and Latino women tend to feel wage discrepancy more acutely, receiving approximately 64 cents and 55 cents on the dollar, respectively, when compared to White, non-Hispanic males.

This inequality must not continue. The economic security of our Nation's children depends on women's access to fair pay. This Nation cannot afford to continue treating women unfairly or leave women behind if they expect to strengthen and grow our economy.

We can start to address this inequity by increasing the minimum wage. Almost two-thirds of workers earning the minimum wage are women. The minimum wage has not been sufficiently adjusted to reflect inflation. Increasing the minimum wage will help lift millions of women and children across the country out of poverty.

It is also necessary to establish policies that enable working mothers to earn a living wage and to take care of their families. This requires workplace protections for pregnant workers, paid family sick leave for emergencies, and affordable child care.

We cannot sit idle as half the population of our Nation lags behind. I look forward to voting in support of measures that break down economic barriers preventing women from reaching their full potential, because when women succeed, we all succeed.

Thank you.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE. Clearly, we can see that she is no stranger to advocating for women and for lifting women out of poverty and standing for them.

Earlier today, Congresswoman FUDGE had the opportunity to speak to thousands of women who are gathered here this week to advocate for the same agenda, women of the Delta Sigma

Theta sorority, where she served as the 21st president. She spoke to them because they, too, join us in understanding that when women succeed, America succeeds.

Now I would like to yield to the gentlelady from California's Third Congressional District, a woman who has a long history of standing up for people; a woman who understands when you talk about the statistics that we have heard tonight, and we will continue to hear tonight, about women living in poverty; a woman who only a few weeks ago, as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of President Johnson's war on poverty, led us in a press conference with his daughter. Standing with her were members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I call her a champion of the people. I call her our warrior of the people.

Join me as I yield to the gentlelady from California, the Honorable BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Let me first thank you, Congresswoman BEATTY, for those very humbling remarks, for your tremendous leadership, and for the work that you do each and every day not only for the people of your district but for the people and the women and the children and families in the entire country.

I just have to say that you have certainly hit the ground running here in Washington, D.C. I think you have because of your life's work in Ohio, and what you have done in Ohio as an elected official and how you have just charted the course for so many issues for so many women. Thank you for leading us tonight.

Also, Congresswoman KELLY, I want to thank you for organizing this Special Order and also for being such a champion for women and children and your district in Illinois.

Again, I have been here now for probably eight terms. You all have just arrived. I just want to thank you. It is really an honor to work with you.

Congresswoman BEATTY, you earlier mentioned the President's quote. I want to mention once again what he said during the State of the Union because I think it is important to make sure that the country continues to hear that the President understands when women succeed, America succeeds, and he is leading the charge in the White House for that, in terms of his leadership.

Today, women make up about half of our workforce, but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. That is wrong, and in 2014, it is embarrassing.

So thank you again, Congresswoman BEATTY, for reiterating the President's quote, because we can't forget that he truly is supportive of our overall agenda.

It is simply unacceptable that women are still being paid 77 cents for every dollar that a man makes. African American and Latina women are being paid even less, at 64 cents and 50 cents, while doing the same work as men.

That is why our Democratic women of the House, under the leadership of Congresswomen NANCY PELOSI, DONNA EDWARDS, and DORIS MATSUI, along with all of us, have launched the "When Women Succeed, America Succeeds" campaign.

In drawing attention to the need for a true economic agenda for women and families in D.C., we all have been hosting a series of events in our districts across the country, and we are hearing the same thing. Congresswomen KELLY and BEATTY, myself, Congresswoman FUDGE from Ohio, are all hearing the same thing.

Saturday, I was really thrilled and honored to have been joined by Leader PELOSI at my event in Oakland. I was also joined by former Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, who so courageously told her story as a former public assistance recipient needing affordable child care and a good-paying job as a bridge over her troubled waters.

Also at this event I was joined by two of my constituents, Clarissa and Irma, who shared their struggle of trying to take care of their family.

Clarissa told us about her struggle as a single parent. When budget cuts caused her to lose the subsidy that she received to pay for child care, she was forced to pull her son, Xavier, out of preschool and resign from her job to care for him during the day. Xavier started kindergarten unprepared and is now in his second year, catching up with his peers. It is very difficult.

Clarissa is an unbelievable mother. So Xavier is going to make it, and he is going to be a true leader because of Clarissa, who is working each and every day to make sure he catches up. This didn't need to happen if she had affordable child care.

Also, it reminded me of when I was in college with my two sons. I always say they were the two best educated children under 3 years of age. They were college-educated under 3 years because I had to take them to class with me while a student at Mills College because I could not afford child care.

Child care is so critical to the success of women. When women succeed, America succeeds.

Let me tell you about Irma. She is a single mother and a restaurant worker, a low-wage worker. She shared her experience with pregnancy discrimination. There was not a dry eye in the room.

Irma, like so many women, became pregnant, and her manager reduced her work hours from 40 hours a week to less than 30 hours a week. He assigned her difficult tasks. You know why he did? To try to get her to resign. They had her doing work that she would never be allowed to do if her doctor had known that they were requiring her to do that.

After assigning her a particularly difficult task when she was 8 months pregnant, Congresswomen BEATTY and KELLY, do you know what her manager told her? He said, Well, if it's so hard, then why go to work? Why go to work?

So Irma's story is the story of so many of our constituents.

It also reminded me, as my colleagues have mentioned, of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress. She was fighting when she was here in Congress for pay equity for domestic women. She was fighting for affordable child care and for education.

Congresswoman CHISHOLM was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. She was someone that many of us looked up to. Her passion for the plight of working poor and women was undeniable.

Leader PELOSI and myself unveiled the Shirley Chisholm Black History stamp on Saturday during our panel discussion. It was just an amazing moment because of all the people in that room. There were 500 of my constituents; young people, middle age, old people. My 89-year-old mother and my two sisters were there. People really understood when women succeed, America succeeds, and the fight that Shirley Chisholm mounted for that.

In Brooklyn, Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE serves in the spirit of Shirley Chisholm. She and Congressmen JEFFRIES, RANGEL, MEEKS, and KELLY had the privilege to unveil Shirley Chisholm's stamp in Brooklyn.

Once again, the message of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm that when women succeed, America succeeds, is so relevant and so current today. So the principles of our women's economic agenda which we are discussing tonight resonates throughout our country, like raising the minimum wage. I just have to reference low-wage workers. The majority are women and women of color.

Also, affordable, quality child care and paid family medical leave. Again, I mentioned my mother, a phenomenal woman who raised three young girls. Paid family medical care for not only our children but our elders, our senior citizens. It is so important that people know that they can care for their family members during their golden years, as well as their children.

Pay equity and closing the gap in terms of the statistics we cited earlier. All of these efforts that we are mounting here in Congress, hopefully we will have bipartisan support for raising the minimum wage in this overall agenda.

All of this means that when women succeed, America succeeds. The success of women is truly central and integral to the success of our country as a great democracy which stands for liberty and justice for all.

So thank you again, Congresswomen BEATTY and KELLY, for organizing this tonight.

I have to close by just saying Congressman Shirley Chisholm was a true Delta woman. She was the epitome of a Delta woman, and so this week, once again, saluting Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and our overall women's agenda is so timely and so profound. Thank you again for this moment.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congresswoman LEE, and so timely are your words.

Talking about Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm reminds me of a quote of hers that I read. It said:

Tremendous amounts of talent are lost to our society just because that talent wears a skirt.

Certainly, like you, she was a phenomenal woman. So let me thank you again for your personal story and for telling us the story of Irma, because as I think of my congressional district and I think of a phenomenal family, I think of the Troy family, a family where I call her Mother Troy and Pastor Troy. They have four sons, but they have three daughter-in-laws who go out every day into the community, whether it is feeding a child, providing child care, or working with the homeless or in housing.

□ 2045

So in each of our communities we have stories because we understand in our communities that when women succeed, America succeeds. Thank you.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield to Congressman JEFFRIES from the great State of New York, and it is, indeed, an honor, as he is coming to share with you that he represents the Eighth Congressional District.

He is no stranger to this platform. You see, as our colleague and classmate, we are standing in tonight as co-anchors because Congressman JEFFRIES is the real anchor. He and Congressman HORSFORD have been stellar in their leadership, in their scholarship, to come here for every Special Order hour under the Congressional Black Caucus and lead us in an agenda that makes a difference in the lives of so many people.

To have him here today, standing with us not only as a Congressman but as a spouse, as a father, sends a strong message that not only do women understand when women succeed, America succeeds, but men also understand it.

I yield to the gentleman from the great State of New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding, as well as for the tremendous job that you have done anchoring this CBC Special Order along with our good friend, the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois.

It reminds me, back at home, sometimes the pastor in my church would have a guest preacher come and deliver the sermon for the occasion, and the guest preacher will do so well that he will remark afterward, it is a dangerous thing when you bring that type of preacher to the pulpit because the congregation may not want the main preacher to come back again.

You and Congresswoman KELLY have done such a tremendous job, certainly, STEVEN HORSFORD and I are at risk of losing our anchor positions. Nonethe-

less, we thank you for all that you have done.

It was a particular honor on Friday, along with Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE and Congresswoman KELLY and Congressmen GREG MEEKS and CHARLIE RANGEL, to be at the official unveiling held by the United States Postal Service of the Shirley Chisholm stamp to commemorate the life and times of this tremendous woman, this Member of Congress, this trailblazer, all that she had done.

I recall that she once made an observation to a young person who was considering a career in public service and asked Congresswoman Chisholm whether he should pursue this or not. Congresswoman Chisholm responded by saying to this young man interested in public service, Well, if you decide to run for office, don't be a career politician. She said, Be a statesperson. Representative Chisholm explained that the difference is, a career politician is only concerned with the next election, but a statesperson is concerned with the next generation.

As we stand here today, we would all do well to take that piece of advice that Congresswoman Chisholm uttered decades ago as it relates to the policy agenda connected to the theme "when women succeed, America succeeds" because, in order for that to be possible, we also have to be sensitive to what we are doing for the next generation of young people in the context of child care availability, universal pre-K, strengthening the Head Start program that has served so many over decades.

What are we doing for the next generation to make sure that women, in particular, who are raising up the future leaders of America, are equipped with the resources and the ability to provide them with the best possible upbringing?

Now, 50 years ago, in this Chamber, President Lyndon Baines Johnson spoke before a joint session of Congress and he declared a war on poverty. And we know that, as a result of that initiative, there were several legislative programs that were enacted into law between 1964 and 1966—Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, school breakfast program, Food Stamp Act, college work study, minimum wage enhancement. All of these programs, taken together, contributed in a meaningful way to lifting millions of people out of poverty.

Now, we know, as we stand here today we have still got a lot of work to be done. But instead of there being a war on poverty, what we have seen far too often during this Congressional session and the previous one is a war on women. That is unfortunate that we have gone from trying to lift people up and give them an opportunity to pursue the American Dream to failing to deal with the issues that women in America face today and, in some instances, aggressively trying to roll back rights that were hard-fought and acquired over the years.

Now, as the President mentioned in this State of the Union that we all witnessed over the last week, that women in America make 77 cents for every dollar that a man earns. President Obama called it an embarrassment. I agree with that statement. It is also a national outrage.

How can it be the case that in America, in 2014, we are still allowing for such significant pay disparity that, as Congresswoman LEE pointed out, is even worse for women of color? So we have got to move forward under the principle—to bring to life the notion that one should be provided equal pay for equal work.

The second thing that we can do is to deal with this minimum wage issue that we have in America. As was pointed out earlier today, two-thirds of minimum wage earners in America are women. And so the failure to raise the minimum wage, to have indexed it appropriately for inflation to account for cost-of-living increases in America, disproportionately adversely affects women in this country. The reality is, with a minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, a woman in America can work full-time, 35 hours per week, across an entire year and, in attempting to raise a family, fall well below the Federal poverty line. It is the classic definition of working poor.

So the failure to raise the minimum wage has consequences for women, for the family, and for the overall well-being of communities all across America, particularly when considering the fact that, in 40 percent of American households, women are either the primary or the sole breadwinner.

So that means, particularly as it relates to some of our good friends on the other side of the aisle who often express concern for family values—and I share that concern—the best family value is a good paycheck; because if you ensure that when people are working hard they are paid well for it, then we are ensuring that they have the capacity to take care of their families, of which women, increasingly, are the sole or primary breadwinners.

So I just commend my distinguished colleagues, Representative KELLY and Representative BEATTY, the dynamic duo of the CBC freshman class, for all that they have done and will continue to do on behalf of women, communities of color, and America in the context of their tremendous advocacy.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congressman JEFFRIES. And thank you for reminding us, if we could eliminate the wage gap, if we take, just in part of my district, in Columbus, in the metropolitan area, if we were able to eliminate the wage gap, it would allow women to have 77 more weeks of food; it would allow them to have six additional months more to pay their mortgage or rent; it would allow them to also have 2,555 gallons of gas to be able to take that child to child care or to go to work.

So it is so important that we understand the agenda and why we stand

here today as members of the Congressional Black Caucus advocating for women in this agenda, because we understand, when women succeed, America succeeds.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor now, to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey. And we share a common bond: his father from New Jersey, my father from New Jersey. He is someone who understands all too well the value of when women succeed, America succeeds. He is a spouse; he is a father of triplets. And so it is so important, when we talk about early childhood education and when we talk about childhood, child care, that we understand that he understands, when women succeed, America succeeds.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman DONALD PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me just acknowledge my colleagues from the freshman class, the gentlewoman from Ohio and the gentlewoman from Illinois, for anchoring this hour. When Women Succeed, America Succeeds.

I now am one of two members of the freshman class that has not had the opportunity to anchor this hour. Mr. HORSFORD and Mr. JEFFRIES have done such an exceptional job in that. As Mr. JEFFRIES pointed out, Mrs. BEATTY is always ready for the challenge and has demonstrated and, as was mentioned earlier, has stepped up to the plate and hit the ground running in the Halls of Congress and has demonstrated her leadership on numerous occasions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that we know we have made great progress in this country closing the gender wage gap; but women still, as it has been stated, and we need to continue to let it resonate, earn just 77 cents on every dollar a man earns for the same work. And for women of color, unfortunately, naturally, I am not surprised, the gap is even wider, with women of color earning just 64 cents for every dollar that a man makes.

In New Jersey, the gap has even grown worse. In just 1 year, women in New Jersey earn, on an average, \$13,000 less than their male counterparts. Now, that is shocking. That is absolutely incredible that the gap, the margin is that wide, because over the course of that woman's lifetime, that adds up to more than \$434,000.

Now, what could a family over their lifetime do with another \$435,000? Probably could own a nicer home, send all their children to college, live in a manner in which all Americans deserve to live in.

□ 2100

What we have is working poor. \$434,000—that is a significant amount of money over the course of someone's life. That is not the America that I was raised to believe in. The home of the free, the land of the brave. Equality is always discussed, but there are always

underlying factors in why those words are not lived up to for some people—particularly in this case, women.

Mr. Speaker, we live in the 21st century. Women now make up more than half of our workforce. As President Obama said last week in his State of the Union Address, paying women less is just plain wrong. In 2014, it is an embarrassment, and we all agree with him in that respect.

This gross gender pay inequality doesn't hurt just women. It hurts families, and it hurts our local economy as well. I don't know in my case of a husband who is happy that his wife is working that hard and making 77 percent of what she deserves to make. Any way you look at it, it is lost revenue coming into the home, and it could make such a difference on small things—vacations, education, groceries, food, sustenance to make it through the week, the month, the year.

On top of that, a woman shouldn't have to feel like she may lose her job if she takes time off to care for her sick children. Now this is something that I know all too well, Mr. Speaker. I know that my wife and I were very fortunate to have the FMLA while we were raising our triplets, you see, because one would get sick, then the next one would get sick, then the next one would get sick, then I would get sick, then my wife would get sick, and it would start all over again. There is no way either one of us could care for them while worrying about whether she is going to have a job to return to, but still today, too many women have to choose between being employed and caring for their families. It is just not right, and it is just not fair.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in the greatest nation on Earth, no one who puts in a 40-hour workweek should be living in poverty, ever. They are playing by the rules. They are getting up every day, working hard, two and three jobs sometimes, and still not making ends meet. No one in this Nation that plays by the rules should find themselves in that condition. In this country, it is just not about having a job, but it is about having a good job.

More than two-thirds of minimum wage earners are women. We owe it to them to pay them a wage that they could actually live on and provide for their families because we know, Mr. Speaker, in many cases, that woman is the wage earner in the home, the only wage earner in the home, and to have them find themselves in that condition is unfathomable in the 21st century.

I was very encouraged by the President's actions to raise the wage for new government workers. It makes sense. It makes sense in this day and age to have a living wage, something you can take care of your family on. Congress needs to follow that example.

There are many things that this Congress could do to ensure that women succeed. Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, pass the Family Act, and raise the minimum wage for all. All of these

measures have been blocked by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but the success of women in America cannot and should not be bipartisan as an issue.

We must put our political differences aside and show this country that we care and we understand. We owe it to our mothers, we owe it to our wives, and we owe it to our daughters to provide them with the quality of life that they deserve.

So I implore my fellow Americans that are watching this tonight, whether your Member is a Democrat or a Republican, to see where they stand on this issue, to check how they are voting in your interests, and if they are not voting in your interests, then you should remove them. Because when women succeed, America succeeds.

I yield back.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congressman PAYNE. "Land of the free, home of the brave"—it reminds me of the words that Leader PELOSI talked about during the 165th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights convention that addressed women in social, economic, and political life. It said that women should be granted all the rights and privileges that men possess. So thank you for that message.

As we continue in this hour, I would like to yield to my coanchor, the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman.

I, too, feel compelled to tell my Shirley Chisholm story. As you have heard, I was privileged enough to be at the unveiling of her stamp, and I was very, very proud to be there, but also, I met Shirley Chisholm 22 years ago. I was a director of minority student services for Bradley University, and we invited Congresswoman Chisholm out to be a speaker. I picked her up from the airport and drove her back when her time was done.

We had the opportunity to have coffee together, and I felt her passion for the everyday person, to improve their quality of life. Little did I know that she was planting a little seed in me, as she was the first black woman elected, and I am the 30th and hopefully counting black woman elected to Congress. So I am very proud of that moment, and it gave me that opportunity to reflect when I heard all of her stories last Friday.

You have heard from our many colleagues that nearly half of the workforce is female, yet two-thirds of all minimum wage workers are women. You have heard 40 percent of working women are their family's primary breadwinner. If these women were paid the same wages as their male counterparts, their family income would increase by \$6,776 a year. This is a \$245 billion increase in wealth nationwide. If women receive equal pay, our economy would generate \$447.6 billion in additional income. Again, we all would benefit from this, not just women.

41.5 million adult women and 16.8 million adult working women live in households below 200 percent of the poverty line. Women workers, single mothers, and low-income workers are the least likely to have access to paid leave and workplace flexibility offered through their employer, only exacerbating gender inequality and women's poverty.

The United States, as we said, the wealthiest country in the world, is the only developed nation that does not require employers to provide paid maternity leave, and the family and medical leave protections that do exist fail to cover nearly half of all full-time employees.

Revenue of women-owned businesses is 27 percent of that of men-owned businesses. I remember when I was a State representative, thanks to SEIU, being a child care worker for a day, and I went into the home of a woman who took care of other children for other women so that they could go to work. Both the child care worker and the mom going to work were very low-wage earners, but if it wasn't for that low-wage earner or child care worker, the mom couldn't afford to pay her so she could then go to work. It would be easy for the moms to stay home, but they didn't want to stay home. They wanted to work. They wanted to build their resume, and they also wanted to give their children the opportunity to be around other children and to learn from those low-wage child care workers. So both groups of women are affected by the minimum wage in this country.

With that, I yield back, Congresswoman.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much for sharing your stories, as my coanchor.

All evening, we have heard the stories of women who have advocated and fought in these Chambers, women like Shirley Chisholm. We know the stories all too well of the Rosa Parks, of the Barbara Jordans. Then as we look to education, we know the stories of women who serve as presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, women like Dr. Johnnetta Cole, women like Cynthia Jackson-Hammond at my alma mater, Central State University. We know women who have worked and earned their place in history because they understand that when women succeed, America succeeds.

We know the stories of our parents. But one thing tonight I want to make sure that we add to these resources when we talk about economic development and we talk about child care and we talk about all the other services, pay equity and health care, and that is the right to vote. That is one of the most critical things that I want us to remember, because when we get people registered to vote and then we allow them to be able to vote, that is one of the most powerful tools.

The story we don't hear when we talk about "when women succeed, America

succeeds" is the story of a little lady from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a lady by the name of Oseola McCarty. The name probably won't mean a lot to a lot of people. She was someone who was a washer woman. She washed clothes for women who didn't look like her or think like her and many who probably didn't even know her name, but this woman in her own little wisdom truly understood the value of when women succeed, America succeeds.

You know why? She took her pay every week, and she put it in a jar, and she saved, and you see, she didn't have children. She didn't have a spouse or brothers and sisters, and she wrote a little note saying that she wanted these dollars to go to a child that was underserved, a child who would be able to take these few dollars and get a college education because that would make a difference in that child's life. Well, at the time of her death, someone opened up that container. And in that container, there was an estimated amount of \$150,000.

So when I think about "when women succeed, America succeeds," I will add the name of Oseola McCarty to that list, because that is what we are talking about tonight. When we talk about members of the Congressional Black Caucus being the conscience of the Congress, it means that when we stand on this House floor advocating for folks who are voiceless, that is our role.

So when we seem so passionate and so concerned when some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle stand in the way of providing health care for women, for providing early childhood education or wanting to make a difference in how we feed our poor, then it reminds me of all the stories that we have heard today.

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It reminds me of all the women who are fighting because they understand that there are faces on all of the statistics that we have heard tonight. And all of these faces, whether well-known or not, when you go back to your districts, understand when you stand with us as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, as you stand with us, with women in our caucus, you are standing with all the women across America. And the message you are sending is, when women succeed, America succeeds.

It is my great honor to ask my co-anchor tonight to close us out and ask everyone to remember that we are here, and, yes, I will say it again, when women succeed, America succeeds.

I yield to the gentlelady from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman. You make me think about my grandmother, because it was my grandmother in the late 1940s who purchased a grocery store and told my grandfather, We are in the grocery business now. It was because of her parents instilling in her and helping

her to succeed and be a role model that she planted a seed for our family and her sons and then my father and my uncle. And it just fed the line for success and all of us going to college because of my grandmother. She was the very strong one in the family.

America cannot afford to maintain the status quo. Nearly 70 percent of Americans on or above the brink of poverty are women and the children who depend on them. That is almost 42 million American women and more than 28 million American children living on or at the brink of poverty. Tonight's conversation is about sparking an agenda that will enable women to achieve greater security. This includes raising wages for women and their families and allowing working parents to support and care for their families.

I want to thank the entire Congressional Black Caucus, especially my fellow co-anchor, the gentlewoman from Ohio, Congresswoman BEATTY, who did a fantastic job.

As we recognize Black History Month, we are reminded the Congressional Black Caucus exists to improve communities through policy action that meets the needs of millions of our most vulnerable citizens. It is that spirit that guides us here tonight. When we see millions of women and children on the brink of poverty, we must act. When we see total household incomes being short-changed because of gender biases in wage, we won't stand for it. When women succeed, America succeeds. I will say it again. When women succeed, America succeeds.

I thank my colleagues for caring enough to get involved in this debate.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. I ask unanimous consent that my colleagues have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MESSER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. With that, I yield to my co-anchor, Representative BEATTY, for any last words.

Mrs. BEATTY. Let me just say as we close out that it is so important that you understand that our message tonight is certainly about making a difference in the lives of those who live in this wonderful country. So let me end as we started with, when women succeed, America succeeds.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived audience.

A NATION DIVIDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address you here on the

floor of the United States House of Representatives and to take up some of the issues that I know are important to you and are important to Americans. I come here tonight to try to put some perspective on this intense debate that we have had.

I would start with this, Mr. Speaker, that over Christmas vacation, I don't know of a time that this Congress hasn't taken a break over Christmas and gone back to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That is the foundation of the core of the faith of our Founding Fathers that established this country, built this Capitol, and worshipped in the building.

I do remember a Christmas Eve present that we got from the United States Senate Christmas Eve morning when they passed a version of ObamaCare on a Christmas Eve vote, but I don't remember a President ever criticizing Congress for leaving town to go visit our families over Christmas vacation until this year when our President of the United States, Mr. Speaker, made his trip to his home State of Hawaii and took his Christmas break out there. He took his family with him, and certainly most thinking Americans don't object to such a thing, but I remember a speech that he gave from Hawaii where he criticized Congress for leaving town over Christmas. He said that we should have stayed here in Washington and solved this myriad of problems we have in our Nation, that going home apparently was inappropriate.

Well, I think when they were here, when the Senate was in voting on Christmas Eve morning that morning when they delivered to us ObamaCare, that was the time they should have gone home for Christmas vacation instead and listened to the American people, because the aftermath of that was that there was a huge wave election in 2010, and Republicans in the House of Representatives ended up with 87 freshman Republicans as a result of the American people's rejecting ObamaCare.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I bring up the point of the President's criticism of Congress for taking Christmas off and point out three other topics that he brought up in that speech. He said he has an agenda for 2014—and this was a preview of his State of the Union address, I might add—and this agenda that the President has for 2014 includes three things: the extension of unemployment benefits, adding weeks on what his number really is—but I know that they have supported 99 weeks, almost 2 years of unemployment—and then the other piece of it was to increase the minimum wage. He is seeking to do that by an executive edict with regard to the Federal employees. And the third piece was he called upon Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Now, when you are home with your family over Christmas and you hear a

speech like that from the President of the United States, the first thing you think is why in the world would he go before the American people with any kind of a message, let alone one like that? Don't take a Christmas break, and I am going to tell Congress what they ought to do. They ought to pass a minimum wage increase; they should extend unemployment benefits; and they should pass—the President said this to us before—the Senate version of the Gang of 8's comprehensive immigration reform bill.

I point out, also, Mr. Speaker, that America now understands that comprehensive immigration reform—CIR, for short—really is three words that encompass one word, and that is “amnesty.”

One would wonder why the President chose those three topics and gave that speech at that time. I would give this answer, Mr. Speaker: no one should really wonder. A President of one party that has the same party that rules in the United States Senate and controls the agenda over there, who is opposed by Republicans in the House of Representatives, is going to do this predictably, because tactically it is what you do in this business if you are not a uniter but a divider, and that is pick the topics that unify your party and divide the opposing party.

So he picked three topics that just essentially and almost universally—I will say, virtually—unify the Democrat Party and are designed to split and divide the Republican Party—minimum wage, for example. Now, I can go back quite a ways on how far back the minimum wage goes. But I can say, Mr. Speaker, that every time that Congress has raised the minimum wage, somebody has lost a job. It has cost jobs every time. We lose more and more of those entry-level job opportunities when the minimum wage goes up because the employers can't afford to train unskilled workers and put them in the workforce and take on all of the risk, the regulation, the recordkeeping, the liability, and sometimes the benefits package that is required. They can't afford to pay all of that and bring somebody into the workforce that has maybe no skills.

The reason that there are entry-level wages is so that people can get started in a job and you can afford as an employer to hire them and keep them there and upgrade their job skills, and hopefully in the same company you can move them right on up through the chain and bring them up through the system, and their wages and their benefit package, or at least their wages, go up with that consistently.

I happen to know how that works. We have never—I founded and have operated a construction company for 28 years. In those 28 years, we have never paid minimum wage. We have always paid over that. But when we brought somebody in at a skill level, we identified their skills, paid them what we thought we could afford to pay them,